

THE OFFICIAL DREAMCAST MAGAZINE



Dreamcast

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TO RUMBLE**

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10 DREAMCASTS UP FOR GRABS

NEW!!

THIS IS AN EXCERPT FROM THE
OFFICIAL DREAMCAST MAGAZINE
- THE ONLY TITLE TO CARRY A CD
CRAMMED WITH DEMOS MONTH
AFTER MONTH, FOR FULL
DETAILS SEE PAGE 10



23.09.99 IT'S COMING



When Sega launch their Dreamcast console on Thursday 23 September, it will mark a turning point in the annals of gaming. Dreamcast is set to totally change the way we play games. Of course, the machine is capable of the most awesome speed and graphics you've ever seen in any games machine ever – better even than the arcades – but you'd expect that from the first new console in almost three years. The real innovation is the way Sega have re-thought the whole gaming experience, building on our natural competitiveness.

All of us compete in everything we do, not just in games. We're in competition when we're at work; we're in competition at the traffic lights; we're in competition racing for the tube or train; we're even in competition flopped out on the beach or standing at the men's urinal (though best not to think too hard about that one). Competitiveness is a human condition. And the most rewarding competitions are played not against inanimate objects or a computer's artificial intelligence, but against other people – against real living, breathing human beings.

Dreamcast is the first console ever to capitalise on this, as you'll realise when you've read through these pages. Internet access, four controller ports built in as standard, plus the innovative Visual Memory unit are just some of the ways Sega deliver true multiplayer gaming. And to find out all about it, you've got us.

What you're holding here is a sample of the Official Dreamcast magazine. Each month we bring you the low-down on everything Dreamcast-related, and because we're the official magazine, we have access to all the best information first. As you've probably worked out by now, we're a bit different from any other games magazine. The way we see it, Dreamcast is a stylish new console, so it deserves a stylish new magazine. Of course games are what it's all about, but we'll be looking at how they fit into the rest of your life, too. Hopefully, this issue gives you a flavour of what we're out to achieve. We can certainly guarantee you've seen nothing like Official Dreamcast Magazine before. But perhaps most importantly, in order for you to fully enjoy the Dreamcast experience we'll be the only magazine to bring you a cover-mounted CD every month, packed with playable demos and movies of the best upcoming games.

Our first CD issue goes on sale on Thursday 30 September. In the meantime, check out our special limited edition preview issue which tells you all about the machine and upcoming games, plus there's a video with footage of over 30 new games so you can see for yourself. That goes on sale on Thursday 2 September.

Which leaves me just enough room to say welcome to Dreamcast. It's good to have you aboard. It promises to be one hell of a ride.

Mark Higham, Editor-in-Chief

DREAMCAST REVEALED

YOU'VE SEEN
THE ADS.
YOU'VE HEARD
THE HYPE.
NOW GET
THE FACTS.
DISCOVER WHY
DREAMCAST
WILL BLOW
YOUR MIND







DREAMCAST

After more than three years in development and 18 months of intense speculation since Dreamcast was first announced, the console that will forever change the face of gaming is finally here. And it's about time too. After five years of PlayStation, the console market is crying out for a system that takes us into the new millennium and which can finally deliver the sort of games we've so far only been able to dream of

DREAMCAST WAS DESIGNED WITH YOU IN MIND and to fit into your riotous lifestyle. From Thursday 23 September, a mere £199.99 will kit you out with the most advanced console money can buy – and at the lowest price at which any other console has ever been launched. Dreamcast not only enables you to play an awesome array of mind-blowing games, it also gets you onto the Internet at a fraction of the cost of buying an overpriced PC. And it makes the most of all the opportunities which that affords, with the development of online gaming that enables you to play against anyone anywhere in the world – up to six billion players, as the ad reminds us.

There are ten games available on the day Dreamcast launches, and more than 30 splashing down before the end of the year.

We've looked in more depth at these ten games, starting on page 11. The range and diversity of the games are shaping up to be mighty impressive too. Sega are wisely porting over their much cherished coin-op titles exclusively to Dreamcast, including classics like *House Of The Dead 2* (with the obligatory plug-in light gun) and *Sega Rally 2*. As well as their coin-op range, Sega are developing Dreamcast-only titles such as city racer *Metropolis*, and *Shenmue*, an epic arcade adventure game boasting one of the world's largest ever game budgets.

But these are only the games Sega are working on. There's a groundswell of programmers and developers gagging to work on Dreamcast. Big names like Namco, Midway, Capcom and Konami are already close to

HAS LANDED

finishing their first Dreamcast chart-toppers, and a mass of PC conversions are also on their way, ensuring that the whole breadth of gaming genres, from strategy to role-player gaming, is covered. We've seen many of these titles already, so we know they're breaking the mould as far as the gaming experience goes. But these are just the first titles to exploit Dreamcast technology, and over the coming months the games that will become available are going to get better and better.

As well as offering Web access (more on that overleaf), the start-up package includes one controller, with four buttons, two analog triggers and an analog joystick. The controller also features two slots to accommodate the Visual Memory unit.

This small, robust unit features an LCD

screen, a mini-joypad and four buttons, offering you the ability to save game data. It can also be used as a kind of Tamagotchi (remember those?) which plays its own standalone games. Programmers are already being clever with the VM - In *Sonic Adventure* you can collect characters in the game then nurture them in your VM when it's taken out of the controller. As if that wasn't enough, you can also save your game data on the VM then take it to the arcades, plug it in and use it there.

The idea of expanding the console's abilities beyond the start-up package is reflected in Sega's plans for add-on peripherals: plug-in light guns, arcade sticks, racing wheels, vibration units and more will be available at launch or soon after.

Dreamcast has all the right bases covered. It's

got cutting-edge hardware, a burgeoning supply of top-quality software ready for release, a mass of game-enhancing peripherals, all-important Net gaming, and the development of innovative products such as the VM.

For those who know their gaming history, things have come a long way since *Hungry Horace*. For those who don't, it doesn't matter - simply sit back, turn your Dreamcast on and experience the future of gaming.

WHERE TO BUY YOUR DREAMCAST

As of Thursday 23 September, you can buy a Dreamcast from all good retailers for £199.99. If you just can't wait that long, then most stockists offer you the chance to pre-order one, guaranteeing that you're first in the queue and won't miss out.

DREAMCAST REVEALED

ONLINE AND OVER

Online gaming is already a massive success in the PC games market. Now the console world wants a slice of the action. Enter DreamKey

THE CLOSEST MOST OF US HAVE COME TO INDULGING IN MULTIPLAYER ACTION is by having everyone crowded round four controllers plugged in to your old console in front of the TV screen with a selection of games, fine beers and packs of Marlboro. It's an experience that any self-respecting console should offer, and one that Dreamcast will deliver in droves. The bottom line though is that there's a lot more to this multiplayering lark than that apres-lager gaming fest on a Saturday night.



The Dreamcast Europe site offers all the facts.

The online gaming world has exploded over the last few years, with classics like *Quake* and the recent *Half-Life* on PC feeding the ever-hungry appetites of hardcore gamers as they hook up with fellow players from all over the planet. Professional tournaments have sprung up, both here and in the US and Japan, offering you the chance not only to compete against real humans instead of the console, but also to climb up the league tables and become one of the most feared and respected players out there.

Before Dreamcast, if you wanted to play games online it would have cost about £800 to buy a well-specified PC with a suitably fast processor and modem. For under £200, Dreamcast is the first machine – never mind console – to enable Joe Bloggs of Didsbury to repack himself as the Colin McRae of the *Sega Rally* world to all and sundry.

To achieve this, nestled in the Dreamcast box is the DreamKey CD. Popping it into the GD-ROM drive and flicking on the machine opens you up to a vast array of possibilities. After entering a few bits about yourself on the registration screen, Dreamcast stores your log-on details on a Visual Memory unit (VM) and you're ready to rumble. You can now access the Dreamcast portal site, Dream Arena, using the DreamKey browser.

When you log on, you're immediately confronted with your own homepage, featuring four main areas. You've got an email service, games section, online shopping and lifestyle information.

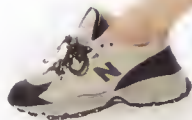
The Games area enables you to access info, previews and reviews of all the games coming to Dreamcast, along with hints and tips and screenshots. Once the first online game is launched in Europe, this area will also show you what game sessions are available and enable you to hook-up with other players for multiplayer mayhem.

The email and chat areas put mass communication at your fingertips! When you buy a Dreamcast you get free unlimited Internet access for the price of a local call and five email accounts per machine, so all members of your household can have their own email address. The chat service enables you to talk live online to other Dreamcast owners about a range of subjects.

Dream Arena's Lifestyle section features information and news from around the Net, giving you easy and quick access to international news stories, sports results and features, and information on music and films.

Another site which is already up and working is Dreamcast Europe (www.dreamcast-europe.com), which targets PC owners with all the Dreamcast facts. Offering fancy but quick-loading Flash-based presentations of Dreamcast's hardware and software, the site also boasts news, online chat, details of upcoming events and competitions.

Now if only BT and OFTEL would deliver fixed-rate local calls as found in parts of the USA, the gaming world would be a perfect place.



HERE

TALK TO US

When you've checked out the official Dreamcast website, pay a visit to our site. Just point the Web browser at www.dreamcastmag.co.uk. The site is up and working from Thursday 23 September. You'll find chat areas, handy reviews of all Dreamcast games, and we're in the process of arranging our own online tournaments.

SMALL BUT PERFECTLY FORMED

Master of all trades, the Visual Memory unit is a versatile fella

A UNIQUE INNOVATION in Dreamcast's arsenal is the Visual Memory unit (VM). It features an LCD screen, mini D-pad controller and an additional four buttons. While its ability to save game data is nothing new, Sega have also designed the VM to be used in the same way as a Tamagotchi, the ridiculously successful virtual pet simulator which appeared a couple of years ago.

The sub-games and characters in *Sonic Adventure* are nurtured independently of the unit, and your characters can even be made to fight those of other players if you connect two Visual Memory units together.

Classic titles like the beat 'em up *Power Stone* also download sub-games in to the VM as you progress further into the game. These can then be taken away and played independently.

The local coin-op arcade is also fair game as far as the VM is concerned. Because of its compatibility with Dreamcast-based Naomi arcade machines, the VM will be able to transfer data into the Naomi coin-op and vice versa via a special port.

SEGA TURN TO BILL GATES

Sega's knight in shining armour?

SOME SAY BILL GATES is the modern-day anti-Christ hell-bent on infiltrating every corner of the media with his Midas/Microsoft touches. More cynical pundits reckon we're all just a tad jealous that he's the richest man in the world. Whatever the case, when Sega were looking around for an operating system to run Dreamcast's software, they decided to go with Mr Gates's Windows CE, a customised derivative of the operating system used by the PC. Which means it's a doddle for game makers to port their finest PC titles over to Dreamcast.

This is damn fine news considering the PC boasts some of the most diverse and imaginative games ever to grace a software retailer's shelf (just a shame you have to cough up £800 to buy one). Sega have vowed they will not allow any half-arsed titles to make the leap from PC to their beloved console though – only the very best will do.

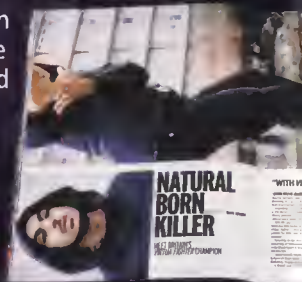
THE REAL MAGAZINE

DON'T JUST DREAM

We're more than just a magazine. Every month we bring you a cover-mounted CD of playable demos so you can try out the best games. And because we're the official title, we're the only people who can deliver a CD every month



Before you buy, check out our honest, down-to-earth reviews of every Dreamcast game to ensure you buy only the best titles. Being official, we're also the first to get inside info on Dreamcast games still in the pipeline



DISCOVER THE FACTS ABOUT DREAMCAST FROM THE ONLY
GOING DOWN. THE FIRST ISSUE GOES ON SALE ON **THURS**

THE REAL MAGAZINE

AM IT... LIVE IT!



...A FIGHTER 3 YOU REALLY HAVE TO THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU'RE DOING, IT'S THE BEST BEAT-UP EVER, DEFINITELY!

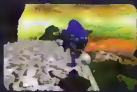


FREE EVERY MONTH: DEMOS OF ALL THE BEST GAMES

Play demos of the best games even before they appear in the shops. On our first CD we'll be bringing you playable demos and movies of all these titles...

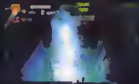
SONIC ADVENTURE

We've got the whole of the Emerald Coast level for you to play.



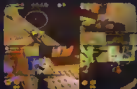
EXPENDABLE

A playable demo of the entire first level of *Millennium Soldier - Expendable* is yours with the first issue of Official Dreamcast Magazine.



TOY COMMANDER

Check out the awesome visuals of this game before it even goes on sale. We've got movie files that reveal the best the game has to offer.



SPEED DEVILS

Not convinced by the review on page 22? Then take a look at Speed Devils for yourself.



BUGGY HEAT

Discover why *Buggy Heat* is shaping up to be one of Dreamcast's most anticipated releases.



* Note that content may change due to circumstances beyond our control.

MAGAZINE THAT HAS THE INSIDE SCOOP ON ALL THAT'S
30 SEPTEMBER, OR RESERVE YOUR COPY ON PAGE 15

FIRST UP!

DREAMCAST IS HERE, AND SO IS THE FIRST BATCH OF GAMES THAT SEGA HAVE CHOSEN AS THE TITLES TO HELP LAUNCH IT.

HERE WE PREVIEW TEN DREAMCAST GAMES THAT WILL BE HITTING THE SHELVES FIRST



△ Well, you gotta find something to do after the pubs have closed.



△ The laws on possession of hand guns could do with an overhaul.

BLUE STINGER

Activision • c. £39.99 • Due: Thursday 23 September

IT'S ENOUGH TO MAKE YOU WONDER what you would do if you were relaxing on a boat near an island, and an asteroid crash-landed, leaving you stranded within a solid sphere and battling with mutant creatures. Yes, *Blue Stinger* is based on a true story. But suspect plot lines aside, this distinctly Japanese adventure game (made in the US) is trying so hard to be a film that it hurts.

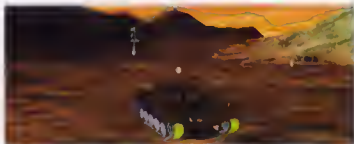
Thanks to the wonders of Dreamcast's bundle of chips it works too. Perhaps most impressive is *Blue Stinger*'s stunning musical score, effortlessly building up tension during the opening video, and putting you on the edge of your seat throughout a number of set pieces.

Trapped on a huge 3D island, exploration and problem solving are essential, but you need to hold your own in a fight too. Scattered liberally through the rooms and corridors are mutant humanoids, waving razor sharp claws at your head like claw-waving was going out of fashion. Some basic punching and kicking can be used to dispatch the blighters, but occasionally the use of heavy weaponry can speed up the process.

It's a difficult game to categorise – somewhere between *Tomb Raider* and *Resident Evil* – but the adventure elements make it an entertaining game for a group of problem solvers to work on. The controls are straightforward and the wildly swinging camera of the Japanese version has been calmed for the UK release.

Quite what you will make of the hammy acting is anyone's business, but it made a few of us piss ourselves laughing.

"THANKS TO DREAMCAST'S BUNDLE OF CHIPS, IT'S ALMOST A FILM" BLUE STINGER



△ Ready to rumble, and negotiations aren't an option. No siree.



△ Picasso's Tank Blasting The Hell Out Of Some No Good Alien Invaders.

INCOMING

Rage • c. £39.99 • Due: Thursday 23 September

ALIENS ARE ATTACKING THE EARTH and mankind's very survival lies in your hands. It's a familiar story, maybe, but it's still one that has provided a mainstay for video games almost since their inception. *Incoming* doesn't veer too wildly from this traditional template, but the equipment provided with which repel the extra-terrestrial hordes is a world away from the game's ancient inspirations.

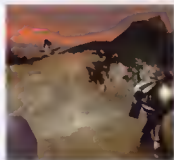
Essentially, *Incoming* is a war game, but instead of kicking off with your neighbours, the threat comes from the sky, with many of the alien aggressors arriving on Earth in classic flying saucer craft. The reception afforded to them is a major departure from the usual wide-eyed rednecks though, as the army is out in force and has no plans to enter negotiations. And guess what? You're in charge.

Incoming is a mission-based affair that involves taking control of several heavily armed pieces of machinery in quick succession. One minute you can be controlling a ground-based gun, the next driving a tank, flying a helicopter, or operating a gunboat. And that's just for starters. The one constant is keeping your finger on the trigger, and this is reflected in the vast amount of colourful pyrotechnics that decorate the game, with retina-burning explosions proving commonplace.

Incoming certainly isn't for the faint hearted and the action is particularly intense, with very little respite from either the fireworks or the pounding techno music that accompanies your every move. One thing's for certain: *Space Invaders* was never this much fun.



△ Even in the fiercest war there's always time to build a snowman.



△ There's plenty of action but nowhere to hide.

MILLENNIUM SOLDIER: EXPENDABLE

Infogrames • c. £39.99 • Due: Thursday 23 September

THE OPENING VIDEO for *Millennium Soldier: Expendable* bravely attempts to come up with some justifiable reason why you are shooting a load of bad guys, but that's hardly important. Whether they are mutants or aliens or just hippies undermining society with their evil pot smoking and bad beards, your purpose is to kill everything you see.

Expendable is an anomaly: a retro attempt to bring back the simplistic enjoyment of 80s gaming, yet peppering it with the brain-melting, eye-watering visuals that would probably make George Lucas recommend they hold back a bit on the special effects. Never mind that eclipse, Patrick Moore should be suggesting we play *Expendable* using a pinhole camera.

If you remember *Commando* (game or film), or any 80s Sylvester Stallone film, then *Expendable's* endless and tireless mini-violence will be familiar. Seriously outnumbered, your alter ego uses increasingly over-the-top weaponry to wipe out increasingly over-the-top enemies. Viewed from 100 feet in the air, avoid as many counter-attacks as possible while destroying any of the scenery that might hide health bonuses or even bigger weapons.

Millennium Soldier: Expendable is simple, honest, enjoyable fun that, because of the small size of your character and protagonists, won't be accused by backbenchers of corrupting children, despite being more violent than most games available.



△ With all the stats, Murray Walker would have a field day.

RACING SIMULATION: MONACO GRAND PRIX

UbiSoft • c. £39.99 • Due: Thursday 23 September

EVERY GAMES MACHINE has to have a Formula One title and, thankfully, Dreamcast is no exception. *Racing Simulation: Monaco Grand Prix* does exactly what it says on the tin, recreating everyone's favourite Sunday afternoon sport at any time of the day or night.

Without an official FIA licence, the game instead hangs itself on the annual shenanigans at Monaco, the narrow course being the only one to actually carry its real name. Fear not though: the other world championship circuits are here but with thinly disguised names (Monza, for instance, is simply referred to as the 'Italian course'). Similarly, actual driver names have been replaced by vague approximations. M. Schmitter, anyone?

That's not to say that the game isn't detailed, and in all but name it faithfully recreates the 1998 season in its entirety, with all of the tracks accurately modelled. Furthermore, it caters for those who like to tamper under the bonnet, enabling you to adjust gear ratios, aerodynamics and so forth in the hope of shaving a crucial hundredth of a second off the lap time.

However, for those with less spare time on their hands, the game is instantly accessible if you want to simply get in and drive, without worrying about such trivialities as braking into corners. If 200mph cigarette packets are your thing, then this will definitely be the game to look out for. And the best thing about it? No commentary from Murray Walker!



△ Locking up at 200mph is never a barrel of laughs.



△ "Hang on while I get this chewing gum off your shoe."

VIRTUA FIGHTER 3TB

Sega • c. £39.99 • Due: Thursday 23 September

THIS WAS THE GAME that got the Japanese so excited when Dreamcast was released in Asia last year. Already a massive hit in the arcades, pleasant surprise gripped the land of the rising sun when the home version turned out to be (a-hem) virtually identical to the one you pop pound coins into.

Despite a favourable reception, this beat-'em-up has actually been slightly modified for the European release, adding a much-needed element. Shockingly the original had no 'versus' mode, a two-player variation of the game that has proved so popular in just about every other fighting game on just about every other console ever made.

A Japanese oversight is a European hit, though, and compared to Capcom's *Power Stone*, *Virtua Fighter* is pure battling. Forget objects and weapons, this is hand-to-hand combat at its slickest.

If you can't quite fathom Japanese game culture then you might find the characters and voice-overs strangely exaggerated, but compared to some of the cheesy acting we put up with, *Virtua Fighter* is Oscar-winning. Three versions in and the fighters have got the hang of hitting each other quite hard, leaping into the air with a blatant disregard for Newton's discoveries, and getting up when, strictly speaking, their heads should be on the other side of the screen.

Thoroughbred to the bone, *Virtua Fighter 3tb* is a game that you think you're getting the hang of, until you get thrashed by someone who has got the bang of it. Just keep battling on until you can pull off a six move combo with your eyes shut.



△ Kicking an old man when he's down? I dunno, the youth of today...



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△ Now that's just plain showing off.

TRICKSTYLE

Acclaim • c. £39.99 •
Due: Thursday 23 September

RECENT YEARS HAVE SEEN an explosion in the popularity of extreme sports, and game manufacturers have been anything but slow in capitalising on this trend. A slew of snowboarding and skateboarding games have appeared, and *Trickstyle* takes its cue from the best of these as well as adding elements of street luge, sky surfing and anything else you might have seen on Channel 5.

There's a crucial difference though, in that the boards in *Trickstyle* hover a couple of inches above the ground, thanks to very clever anti-gravity technology.

It will come as no surprise then to learn that the game is set firmly in the future. The early part of the 23rd century to be precise, a world largely decimated by global warming, a deliberate play by the manufacturers of the hoverboards, who now host races across the majorly modified cities of New York, London and Tokyo.

Thankfully, the game doesn't rely solely on its background story and is firmly based on fast, reactive action, with numerous elaborate tricks available to those with the manual dexterity to carry them out. Stylistically, *Trickstyle* has clearly been influenced by Japanese Manga cartoons, and the nine different boarders all have a distinct look and personality, much like those in fighting games, something in keeping with special moves that they are each able to pull off.

Trickstyle is certainly an ambitious-looking game, and the bold visuals are well suited to Dreamcast's graphical capabilities. Pepsi Max not provided.



△ "Here we are at Glastonbury good and early."



△ Oh dear, the council forgot to grit the roads.

SEGA RALLY 2

Sega • c. £39.99 •
Due: Thursday 23 September

ANYONE WHO HAS STUMBLED into an arcade in the last few years can barely have failed to witness *Sega Rally* in all its multiplayer glory. Usually stacked eight wide, the units provide the centre point of any well-ordered establishment, offering the ultimate in off road thrills as budding rally drivers take each other on over a mixture of terrain.

Sega Rally 2: Sega Rally Championship is the definitive version of the game, and rally fans will be delighted to learn that it has now been converted to Dreamcast.

Remaining faithful to its arcade counterpart, the action takes place across deserts, through forests, over mountains and on the shores of a lake, not to mention Alpine and Riviera sections, with the disparate conditions requiring very different driving techniques. There's very little time for sight-seeing though – the speed of the game pushes Dreamcast to its limit. The cars are meticulously detailed, with authentic stickers and decals plastered over the bodywork, and the back windscreens reflecting the surrounding environment superbly, exactly like the arcade version.

As for the cars, it's a boy racer's dream, offering an opportunity to take the wheel of such dream machines as the Ford Escort, Toyota Corolla, Peugeot 306, and Lancia Delta, to name but a few. And with a two-player split screen mode, and the prospect of online play, arcades could soon be a thing of the past.



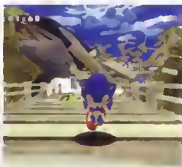
△ Run! It's Doctor Robotnik! In a space ship!



△ Ryma can use hypnotic powers to disable opponents.



△ Glaring green eyes, and more weapons than Saddam, but he's a goodie.



△ I'd turn around and head back to town if I were you, mate.

SONIC ADVENTURE

Sega • c. £39.99 • Due: Thursday 23 September

SONIC ADVENTURE SOUNDS like the title of a truly dreadful concept album about a day in the life of a blind superhero. Don't worry, it isn't. The Sonic of the title is one other than Sonic the Hedgehog, the electric-blue spiny-backed superstar (vaguely, vaguely reminiscent of scary Keith from the Prodigy) who became one of the world's most recognisable characters in the early nineties thanks to a series of best-selling Megadrive titles. His face was everywhere. Then, while our hero was 'resting' between missions, along came Lara Croft and Crash Bandicoot, and before long no-one wanted to know anymore. Kids are so fickle, aren't they?

Well this is the spiky one's big comeback, and he's taking no prisoners. One selling point of the original Sonic games was their tremendous sense of speed; in *Sonic Adventure*, vivid 3D visuals pour from the screen so quickly, your eyeballs can't quite drink them in; your brain gulps at the images like a drowning dog trying to swallow the river entire while you pitter and patter and pound at the joy pad and try to ignore the sick of drool that's sliding down your chin.

Sounds like fun? It should do. This is one of the fastest, most spectacular games ever made, a hyperactive hallucination you steer with your hands. It's also a damn good play – simple for the newbies to get into, deep and complex enough to please the sniffy videogaming snobs. It's also – and this is the important bit – a game that could only exist on Dreamcast right now. Do you see? Do you see?

POWER STONE

Eidos • c. £39.99 • Due: Thursday 23 September



IF YOU FIND THAT GAMES have lost some of their energy and originality, look at *Power Stone* and get back to us. While clearly a fighting game, there are so many new touches in this scantily quick title that it leaves you breathless, sweaty, wide-eyed and laughing your head off like a hyena on nitrous oxide.

If you are a little more used to the standard flying kicks or jabbing punches of a traditional beat 'em up, *Power Stone* feels like a different game altogether. Instead of a ring, you now fight in a small location or room in which you can run around at will in order to avoid your opponent's 'advances'. These locations are absolutely stuffed full of objects that you can throw or kick at the other player, with crocodile skin luggage, a park bench or even a plant pot often found close to hand. Less portable items such as lampposts and trees can be used to trigger impressive swinging attacks, while windows and boxes beg to be destroyed in a pseudo-rock-star-in-hotel style.

Treasure chests spew forth bazookas, flame throwers, and the eponymous power stones. Collect one of each colour and your character morphs into some super maniac, replete with pyrotechnic punches and psychedelic sweep-kicks.

While your hardcore fighter might balk at such candy, newcomers should welcome the chance to just stab randomly at buttons, resulting in some accidental hit combinations and much hilarity, as they come to terms with the game's subtleties. The game in one word? F-u-n.

SPEED DEVILS

Ubi Soft • c. £39.99 • Due: Thursday 23 September

JUST WHEN YOU thought racing games had covered just about every angle imaginable, a racing game that mixes gambling, mammoth event-stuffed tracks, ten bizarre cars and the possibility for some serious fender bending.

While a racing game from helmet to tyres, things aren't quite what you'd expect. Tracks spanning the world are littered with cunning traps and shortcuts, and it takes several minutes just to complete a single lap. Even if you practice a single course for an hour you can't be sure you know it back to front, and that means that *Speed Devils* isn't something you forget in a weekend.

Trying the different tracks is the carrot. The route through a made-up Hollywood studio complex is inspired; rainforests and tundra are later highlights.

Surely *Speed Devils* is one of Dreamcast's finest-looking games. Each course is smothered in detail and variety, from the different road surfaces to villages, mountains and waterfalls that zip by at a super-smooth 30 frames a second.

The pounding soundtrack feeds you energy to battle against your opponents, one of which can be a hum sitting next to you, thanks to the split-screen option. It's quite unlike *Sega Rally 2*, or for that matter any other racer you've played. It's not just a matter of getting round the tracks, but of getting the better of your opponents, through turbo boosts and sneaky routes avoiding trouble.

• For previews of over 60 upcoming games, don't miss our special issue – details on page 27.

Good news

We're trading

for a Dream



Say hello to the new top dog in gaming. Dreamcast is the most powerful and flexible games console ever, far more powerful than any of its competitors. It packs a whopping great 128-bit processor. It's also the first ever console with on-line capabilities. So now

vs. kids.

Rex

mcast

console



you can surf the net and e-mail players from around the world from the comfort of your armchair. The chunky new Dreamcast console. No wonder top gamers recommend it.

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COMPETITION

RESULT!

WIN TRIPS TO SEE THE CREAM OF EUROPEAN FOOTBALL, PLUS 10 DREAMCASTS UP FOR GRABS

To celebrate the launch of Dreamcast, Sega and *Official Dreamcast Magazine* have joined forces to offer you the chance to win some fabulous prizes just by answering one little question. If you're a footie fan, this competition is just too good to miss; if you're not, any one of these prizes on offer is still very much worth winning.



FIRST PRIZE

Don't just dream it, do it: tickets for two to watch Arsenal in London, St Etienne in France and Sampdoria in Italy! Your chance to watch three of the top teams in Europe on their home turf, all of whom have been chosen by Sega to display the Dreamcast name on their shirts! This great prize includes all flights to see the matches in the south of France and Genoa, plus accommodation in each team's home city. So as well as watching world-class players and soaking up the atmosphere of three of Europe's most famous football stadiums, you and a friend can enjoy the nightlife in each of these three cities.

10 x SECOND PRIZES

Ten spanking new Dreamcasts are up for grabs for ten lucky winners. If you're not lucky enough to win the first prize you could well be in line to win one of these amazing new next-generation consoles. Here in this very magazine you've read what the awesome Dreamcast can do, and about some of the games you can play on it, and now you can win one of your very own.

To be in with a chance of winning, just answer the question below, complete the coupon and post it (or a photocopy, or a postcard with all the information requested) to the address shown below. So get on the case, and good luck.

Terms and conditions: Only entries with all the questions completed and received before the closing date will be entered into the prize draw. Winners will be notified by post. No cash alternative. Prizes not necessarily as shown. No correspondence will be entered into. The Editor's decision is final. All the other usual competition rules, conditions and restrictions apply. And all that. Phew!

QUESTION: WHAT IS THE HOME CITY OF SEGA-SPONSORED SAMPDORIA?

Name: _____

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Email address: _____

Job title: _____

Company name: _____

Send your entry to: Football Competition C00M9910, OOM, Customer Interface, Bradley Pavilions, Bradley Stoke North, Bristol BS12 0BQ, UK.
(Closing date: Friday 12 November 1999)

☐

Please tick if you do not wish to receive details of further special offers or new products from other companies

☐

Tick if under 18 years of age (this information is required so we do not mail inappropriate material to minors)

FOURPLAY

▽ HEATHER NEWMAN

AGE: 26

OCCUPATION: teacher

FAVOURITE GAME OF ALL TIME:

GoldenEye 007.

MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO:

Time Crisis 2. "I've got to shoot people. I think it's something in my blood. Good therapy."

▷ DANNY FISCHER

AGE: 26

OCCUPATION: student

FAVOURITE GAME OF ALL TIME:

"I love playing *FIFA*, but it's *Driver* at the moment."

MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO:

"Any footie game. Now the season's started again I'm dying to take part. What does *Sega Soccer* look like? Or *UEFA Striker*?"

▽ CAMERON YORK

AGE: 21

OCCUPATION: account executive

FAVOURITE GAME OF ALL TIME:

"*Tomb Raider*. No, *Gran Turismo*. I can't decide."

MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO:

Shermoe. "It looks fabulous. I'm not worried about everyone dissing the lack of interaction."

▷ JOHN MOORE

AGE: 24

OCCUPATION: assistant retail manager

FAVOURITE GAME OF ALL TIME:

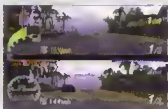
"*Mario Kart* on the SNES."

MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO:

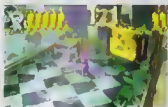
"Any driving game, I suppose. I haven't really been following the build-up, but I've heard great things about *Metropolis Street Racer*."

GAME ON

Launch day is a nervous time for any new console. We ask four ODM readers to sit down with three Dreamcast games available in the first month. **STEVE OWEN** orders in the beer and fags



△ Split-screen and speed. Awesome.



△ Lob luggage at limbs in PowerStone.



△ Speed Devils: just like trying to drive on Britain's roads.

THERE'S SOME DEGREE OF EXCITEMENT as we approach the launch date of Sega's Dreamcast console. As you can imagine, it wasn't too difficult to find four punters willing to test out four of the Dreamcast's first batch of games. Lured into our exotic studio in Central London, Danny, Cameron, John and Heather sat down to try out *Sega Rally 2*, Capcom's *Power Stone* and Ubi Soft's *Speed Devils*. For most of our gamers, this was their first taste of Dreamcast.

"A guy in my house bought a Japanese console when they first came out," says Danny. "It cost him about 600 quid, so he's also a bit protective. But I have played *Sega Rally 2* in the cinema – you know, the pods they've got there."

"I'm still playing

Mario Kart on my SNES, which I reckon is the finest multiplayer game ever," says John.

"I've got a PlayStation and I love it," enthuses Heather. "My ex- had an N64 as well, and I used to play *GoldenEye* all the time."

"I see games more and more like films," explains Cameron. "There are loads of good ones about, and loads of crap ones too, but it's got to suit your mood at the moment you play it in order to be really good. I absolutely love *Driver* on the PlayStation, and yet there are times when I really can't be bothered to play it."

But enough of this banter. There are games to be played, opinions to be made and arguments to be had. Let's cut straight to the chase...



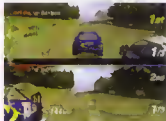
FOURPLAY

SEGA RALLY 2

PUBLISHER: SEGA

DEVELOPER: SEGA

PRICE: £39.99



△ It gets dirty as Danny's Impreza pulls away from Heather's Lancia.

THIS SEEMS LIKE a natural start: an opportunity for the competitive boys to show off in front of Heather. Danny and Cameron are up first for a two-player battle, and while Cameron bravely tries to flick through the various cars, Danny is excitedly clicking his way through the options, desperate to start power-sliding. A few minutes (and a predictable victory for Danny) later, everyone seems pretty impressed.

"You can pick it up instantly and have a fairly gripping race," reckons Cameron. "With more time you could learn the tracks and get the hang of sliding round properly and how much brake to apply."

"Definitely," agrees Danny. "This is only the second time I've



"A GREAT VARIATION OF TRACKS – NOT A DOG AMONG THEM"

– HEATHER ON 'SEGA RALLY'



△ Full-on weather effects for total realism.

"THE 'BATTLE' ASPECT IS KIND OF WASTED WITHOUT WEAPONS"

– JOHN ON 'SPEED DEVILS'

played it but already I feel more at home. Can I have another go? Winner stays on?"

The others generously agree. After an hour, everyone has had a few goes and Danny is no longer unbeatable.

"There are certainly a lot of tracks," says John. "I counted 15 in the time we were playing."

"I thought I'd played this before, at the arcades," says Heather, "but I think it was the first one. That only had three tracks. Track one was too easy and the last one too hard, but this game seems to have a great variation of tracks – not a dog among them. But the graphics aren't as good as I expected them to be."

"Yeah, there was loads of draw-in in front of you," points out

Danny. "I thought the point of Dreamcast was to get rid of that."

"Have I got big hands?" asks Cameron. "It's hard to use the joystick with your thumb at the same time as braking unless you have the hand span of an infant."

Time is by now pressing on, so we turn to something slightly more violent.

POWER STONE

PUBLISHER: EIDOS

DEVELOPER: CAPCOM

PRICE: £39.99



△ Stabbing buttons wildly seems to be the best tactic.

THIS HUGE INNOVATIVE beat 'em up seemed to surprise everyone assembled. Never before has this type of game brought non-stop giggling from the group as they came to terms with timing their attacks, and throwing objects at each other.

"There's a bloody great big bazooka!" shouts John to Heather, who has just opened a treasure chest. But she's kicked into a wall by Cameron (who is, by his own admission, "just pressing buttons randomly") before she can collect it.

"I'll put my big sword between your bazookas!" shouts Cameron in one of his many Carry On-inspired dialogues.



"We nicknamed this a 'collect 'em up' rather than a beat 'em up,'" informs Cameron, "as there are so many interesting objects, weapons and bits of furniture to investigate in between beating the hell out of each other. Every fight location is an Aladdin's cave of surprises."

"Some of the power-up effects are very entertaining," enthuses Danny. "You have to have sympathy for the recipient of the demonic, supercharged martial arts assault."

"I've not really liked fighting games in the past, but we just kept laughing when we played this," says Heather, avoiding the indirect question. "Some of the characters definitely seem to be more powerful than the others. That mummy character – Jack, wasn't it? Jack seems to be the best, crawling around on all fours, but the more you played it the more you realise that you were getting better."

"I've never seen a fighting game with such a wide range of objects and weapons and such fluid 3D movement," admits John. "The different stages are amusing to explore, the characters seem quirky and original, and I'm sure I chanced upon some impressive special moves from time to time. It's got a nice combination of humour and cartoon-style violence, with a pleasing nod towards the platform genre."

Power Stone looks like a definite success. Each of our testers seems desperate to have another go but, cruelly, ODM insists that it's time to move on.

"THERE ARE SO MANY INTERESTING OBJECTS, WEAPONS AND BITS OF FURNITURE TO PICK UP"

– CAMERON ON 'POWERSTONE'



△ "Speed Devils isn't based on real life, then," offers Danny as a UFO spins over the Nevada sky. The sight of little-green men promptly put him in the barrier.

SPEED DEVILS
PUBLISHER: UBI SOFT
DEVELOPER: UBI SOFT
PRICE: £39.99

SPEED DEVILS DOESN'T have the reputation that pushes the other three games, but arguably the astounding graphics are the best demonstration so far of what Dreamcast is capable of. However, it doesn't seem to capture the imagination of the group we've assembled.

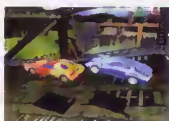
"This is certainly the most visually stunning game," claims Cameron, with general agreement from the other three. "The sky and landscape images are awesome. But, hey, we're not here for the sightseeing, are we? As a driving game it lacks any feeling of being in a race."

"The cars look good," concedes Danny, "but they're very unresponsive. You have to slow almost to a stop to make anything other than a gentle bend. There seems to be a lot of imaginative ideas lurking about in the different options and courses, but I think this rather distracted the developers from making it fun to play rather than nice for us to look at."

"The whole 'battle' aspect is kind of wasted without weapons, or at least a smaller

"THERE WAS LOTS OF DRAW-IN IN FRONT OF YOU. I THOUGHT THE POINT OF DREAMCAST WAS TO GET RID OF THAT"

– DANNY ON 'SEGA RALLY'



△ "Psychedelic tunnel sequence hurts eyes."



△ "Can you go any slower?"

gap between the participants," says John. "On the other hand, the different locations are good and the short cuts look fun. If the controls were improved and it was speeded up slightly, this might appeal to anyone who isn't too hard-core when it comes to driving games."

At that moment John's point is proved as Heather struggles to race a lap using every short cut or perceived short cut she can see. Danny and Cameron both point out bits of the scenery that might hide a quicker route back to the finish line.

Despite a number of failed attempts at completing a jump through an airline hanger, and spinning off into a tar pit (for the third lap running), Heather is more magnanimous: "It seems really sedentary after *Sega Rally*, but I like the variety of cars and tracks and all of the different routes you can take. Looking at the single-player options, I think there's a lot more there than we're giving it credit for. I think you could place bets with other drivers to improve your own car."

"It's not perfect, but I agree with John that the less hard-core would find it easier and more enjoyable to play than *Sega Rally*. There's nothing wrong with sightseeing."



YOU KNOW YOU'RE OBSESSED WHEN...

...YOU HAVE A VIDEOGAME CHARACTER TATTOO ON YOUR LEG

Two hours of agony. Bloody scabs for a week afterwards. Not many people would go to the trouble of having a game character etched onto their skin. Meet the exceptions – 28-year-old Nick Wiswell and his wife

"I'VE LOVED GAMES EVER SINCE 1980 when I got my first computer, a ZX-81. Over the years I've amassed a mountain of consoles, and now work in the software industry as an associate producer at Bizarre Creations. I'd been thinking about getting a game character tattoo for ages. I already have a normal one and decided a videogame tattoo would be ideal because the wife's got a Sonic one she's had for eight years.

"Sega's *Nights* on Saturn is one of my all-time favourite games, and I love the main character, so I thought: 'That's the one for me.' I downloaded an image off the Net and used a *Nights* player's guide book I've got to help the tattoo artist get the right colour palette for the character.

"The tattoo artist was surprised by my request because he'd never done a videogame character before. He was up for the challenge though, because the design work was so intricate.

"The actual tattooing hurt badly, especially during the outline and detailing stages. It took two hours to do and cost the wife £45 – it was her wedding present to me. At first the tattoo bled and scabbed up, but after the scabs fell off six days later I was really impressed with the tattoo.

"The first time I showed it to my mates they were like: 'Oh, my god, what have you done?!' They think it's a bit sad because I've got a videogame character. As for the folks, my parents don't approve of that sort of thing, but I'm not much bothered.

"My bosses love the tattoo, and it gets shown off when people visit the office. Unfortunately the wife's bosses aren't so happy with her Sonic tattoo – let's just say her employer is also a four-letter word beginning with 'S' who make a rival console.

"In the meantime, we're happy because we went to E3 this year and were introduced to the team who made *Nights*. They'd already seen our tattoos on the Net and knew who we were in advance. That was a very proud moment.

"I'm planning to have another done. I'm not sure which character yet, but I'm definitely interested in a Capcom one."

Dreamcast... **SPECIAL 'ONE-SHOT' EDITION**

Before you buy your Dreamcast console, discover what it can do. In this special limited-edition 'one shot' we bring you the full SP

DISCOVER

how the Internet is being used to play online games

FIND OUT

what's special about the first 60 games to hit the shelves

HEAR

what four new gamers think of the launch titles

PONDER

with us the future for games consoles

FREE VIDEO

Don't just read about the games, watch what they'll be like. Our exclusive free video features footage of more than 30 upcoming titles.

OUT ON THURSDAY 2 SEPTEMBER

